



# Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

## Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging reflects the degree to which an individual feels included, respected, accepted, and supported by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Within a school context, a sense of belonging results in an individual feeling proud to belong to their school (Goodenow, 1993).



### Why is it important?

- A sense of belonging is identified as a basic human need (Maslow, 1962) essential to human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
- Relationships that enhance ones' sense of belonging promote a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Lambert et al., 2013).
- Teachers with a strong sense of belonging can, in turn, foster a sense of belonging among students (Pesonen, 2016).

## In Practice

Schools can support a sense of belonging at work by providing opportunities for staff to interact with one another and by ensuring that all have an equal opportunity to participate.



### What can schools do?

Schools can establish a sense of community and camaraderie through the following actions:

- Implement a variety of strategies aimed at ensuring all employees have opportunities to form bonds with their colleagues (e.g., team outings, non-work games and activities).
- Enhance school connectedness by providing opportunities for staff to have input on school-related decisions.
- Foster a school climate where staff feel supported in both their day-to-day responsibilities and long-term career goals.
- Facilitate an inclusive work culture where individual differences are accepted, all staff have equal rights, and employees feel understood and supported.



### Leader Reflection

School leaders can create conditions for staff to form institutional ties and develop support networks by:

- Establishing common goals that everyone can work towards to increase workplace engagement and enhance feelings of competence.
- Praising both individual and collective efforts and encouraging staff to follow suit in celebrating the achievements of their colleagues.
- Facilitating respectful, warm relationships and trust among colleagues by organizing informal, non-work-related activities and outings.
- Developing a sense of community through regularly scheduled team meetings where staff can openly share concerns and ask questions on school-related matters.
- Modeling a climate of open communication and collaboration by implementing an open-door policy or setting aside regular office hours to discuss staff concerns.

## References

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